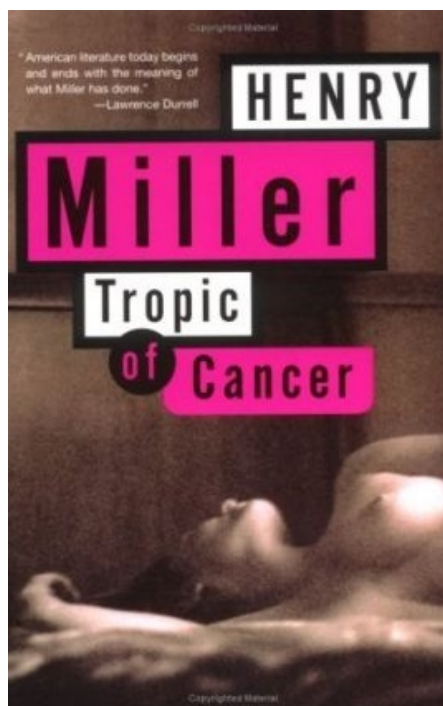




Tropic of Cancer

Henry Miller

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Now hailed as an American classic, *Tropic of Cancer*, Henry Miller's masterpiece, was banned as obscene in this country for twenty-seven years after its first publication in Paris in 1934. Only a historic court ruling that changed American censorship standards, ushering in a new era of freedom and frankness in modern literature, permitted the publication of this first volume of Miller's famed mixture of memoir and fiction, which chronicles with unapologetic gusto the bawdy adventures of a young expatriate writer, his friends, and the characters they meet in Paris in the 1930s. *Tropic of Cancer* is now considered, as Norman Mailer said, "one of the ten or twenty great novels of our century."

Tropic of Cancer Details

Date : Published January 6th 1994 by Grove Press (first published 1934)

ISBN : 9780802131782

Author : Henry Miller

Format : Paperback 318 pages

Genre : Fiction, Classics, Literature, Novels

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From Reader Review Tropic of Cancer for online ebook

Parthiban Sekar says

"I am going to sing for you, a little off key perhaps, but I will sing."

This is definitely not one of those books which you take on your holidays to a sunny-side parks, get cozy, and read, as it contains extreme contents, acts, thoughts, and ideas which would leave you dumbfounded and deranged. There was no any usual forms of addressing "Women": it lacks "Ladies" and misses "Miss" (*You get the idea, don't you?*); There are also countless women who take a colloquial name by their anatomy. No Wonder this book was once banned for its *obscenity*, but later declared as otherwise.

"This is not a book in the ordinary sense of the word. No, this is a prolonged insult, a gob of spit in the face of art, a kick in the pants to God, Man, Destiny, Time, Love, Beauty... what you will."

Henry himself takes us through the dark slippery streets crowded by Fifteen-Franc *whores* (pardon my French!), full of misfortune, ennui, grief, and suicide, of the bohemian French Capital city. It is easier, too easy to despise this *heartless* book as a mere diatribe. But you never know what you encounter in the dark corners of the midnight streets.

Amidst the loud chaos and the silent syphilis, you will hear him loud and clear in his *lowly* tone his reflections on human conditioning which at times, might sound racial (But I doubt). There are no miracles or no microscopic vestige of relief but endless torment and misery of homeless and ever-hungry Henry, walking the plagued streets Franc-less in the *Cancer* of his time.

Not for the weak ones!

Jafar says

So, I was glancing through some of the reviews here and noticed that someone has totally disparaged this book because its "hero" is immoral. It always bewilders me when people judge a book according to the moral judgment that they pass on its characters. Like when I was looking at the reviews of John Updike's *Run, Rabbit* and saw a woman saying that she hated the book because Angstrom left his wife twice in the book. I was like, *don't take it personally, lady; he's not your husband*. A lot of people do it. They ignore the book and get too tangled up in how likeable the characters are. I really don't get this. Someone should explain it to me. Is *Lolita* a bad book because it's about a pedophile? Should writers feel like their characters will be competing in a popularity contest in the minds of the readers? Should we then only read books about angels floating happily in Heaven, doing good things? Aren't evil and immorality – whatever they mean – facts of life that should be dissected and explained by literature?

I didn't bother with the morality of the hero. I don't care if he slept with a whore and then stole her money and ran away. Who cares? Look at all that delicious writing instead, all the ranting and raving of a tormented and brilliant mind, and the brutal honesty of it.

I don't know why publishers still insist on marketing this book for its "explicit language and breaking of sexual taboos in literature." That's just so passé in an age when even pornography makes us yawn. The beauty of this book lies somewhere else.

Michael says

Tropic of Cancer is held in high regard by Authors that I respect. In particular, George Orwell (whose essay, "Inside the Whale") has high praise for Miller's bravery, directness and honesty.

Miller's foul language has lost the power to impress; modern readers will not feel the level of shock and awe experienced by previous generations. The book has so much critical adulation that I have spent a few weeks ruminating before expressing my own view.

I don't like it....

Oh, don't mistake me, I "get" it, I also understand that highbrow intellectual theory is bandied about in praise of the "style". It leaves me cold.

This is an excrescence of a book, but like finding a turd dotted with precious gems, if you can overcome your dislike you will be rewarded by a few flashes of brilliance.

I have met parasitic characters like Tropic's "hero"; amoral, abusive, selfish, pretentious, hedonistic users beneath contempt, occasionally given to drunken introspection and momentary genius. If you run across a real life "Miller" in your travels give him a wide berth, he's just not worth it.

Jason Pettus says

(Reprinted from the Chicago Center for Literature and Photography [cclapcenter.com]. I am the original author of this essay, as well as the owner of CCLaP; it is not being reprinted here illegally. Sorry; the last paragraph today gets cut off a few sentences early!)

The CCLaP 100: In which I read for the first time a hundred so-called "classics," then write reports on whether or not they deserve the label

Book #20: *Tropic of Cancer*, by Henry Miller (1934)

The story in a nutshell:

Like many of the other novels to first become commercial hits under the moniker of "Modernism" (see, for example, past CCLaP-100 title *Mrs Dalloway* from the same period), Henry Miller's infamously raunchy *Tropic of Cancer* from 1934 doesn't bother to concern itself much with traditional plot or a traditional three-act structure, but is rather an attempt to capture the details of a particular moment in history in as intense a way as possible, using not only humorous anecdotal tales but also the brand-new literary technique known as "stream of consciousness." And man, what a period of history to capture -- based on Miller's own experiences from half a decade before, the novel is set in Paris in the years after World War One, a time when most young people had turned permanently cynical and nihilistic, horrified as they rightly were over what exact carnage humans had proven themselves capable of, now that humans had added mechanized industry (trains, machine guns, biological weapons) to the business of war. Add to this that the US itself had still not established its own global-class artistic community (which wouldn't happen until New York's Greenwich Village after World War Two), and you're left with the situation Miller describes with such black humor here -- of entire Parisian neighborhoods become boisterous, drunken melting pots, packed to the gills with bohemians from around the world who no longer give a crap about *anything*, who embrace such things as casual sex and exotic drugs in a way no other generation had embraced them before, as they party their way to the apocalypse they were all sure was right around the corner. Multiply by 300 pages, and you

basically have Miller's book.

The argument for it being a classic:

There are two basic arguments over why *Tropic of Cancer* should be considered a classic, starting with the book itself: It is, after all, a shining example of early Modernism, the exact kind of radical departure from the flowery Victorian style that so many young artists were embracing back then, here done in a mature and self-assured way that builds on the literary experiments of the previous twenty years, but that finally makes it palatable for the first time to the general reading audience (and by "palatable" I mean "not incomprehensible," thank you very MUCH James Freaking Joyce). As such, its fans say, the novel should be rightly celebrated for the literary masterpiece it is; one of those rare books that gets stream-of-consciousness exactly right, one of those rare books that perfectly shows the combination of arrogance and self-hatred that mixes in the warm dysfunctional heart of any true bohemian. Ah, but see, in this case there's an entirely different second reason why this should be considered a classic; because for those who don't know, thirty years after its initial publication in Europe, this was one of the landmark artistic projects of the 1960s to help finally lift the yoke of government censorship in America, one of the first projects used by the courts to help define what was exactly is and isn't "obscene," adding immense fuel to the countercultural fire that was going on in this country at the same time. If it wasn't for *Tropic of Cancer*, fans say, we would still have the all-or-nothing paradigm of the Hays Code in the arts, instead of the "put out what you want and we'll give it a rating" paradigm of our present day; no matter what you think of the book itself, they argue, this alone is a reason to consider it a classic.

The argument against:

Like many of the titles in the CCLaP 100 series (see *The Catcher in the Rye*, for example), the main argument against *Tropic of Cancer* seems to be the "What Hath God Wrought" one; that is, the book itself may not be that bad, but it legitimized something that should've never been legitimized, in this case whiny confessional stream-of-consciousness rants from broke artists in their twenties living in big cities, complaining for 300 pages about how unfair life is and how all the prostitutes keep falling in love with them. **Yep, it was *Tropic of Cancer* that started all that**, critics claim; and anytime you come across yet another sad little blog about how the heart of the city beats in the weary soul of some overeducated, entitled slacker, that's one more time we should visit the grave of Miller and pee all over it, in retribution for him creating a situation where such blogs are encouraged in the first place. Again, it's not so much that people complain about the book being awful on its own (although some will definitely argue that stream-of-consciousness has always been a house of cards, difficult to make work well within a literary project); it's more that the book simply isn't *great*, and should've never gotten the accolades and attention it did, with Miller being damn lucky that he had as exciting a sex life as he did at the exact moment in history that he did, along with the shamelessness to write it all down.

My verdict:

So as will very rarely be the case here at the CCLaP 100, let me admit that this is one of the few books of the series I've actually read before; in fact, much more than that, it was one of the books I practically worshipped in my early twenties as a snotty, overeducated, oversexed artist myself, a book that had a bigger impact on both my artistic career and just how I lived my life in general back then than probably any other single project you could mention. So needless to say I was a bit biased going into this week's essay; I not only consider *Tropic of Cancer* a classic, but easily among the top-10 of all the books in this series, one of those books that any restless young person of any generation should immediately gravitate towards starting around their 18th or 19th birthday. And that's because Miller is so good here, *so damn good*, at perfectly capturing that restlessness that comes with any generation of young, dissatisfied creatives -- that sense that they *want* to do something important, that they *should* be doing something important, just that none of them know *how* to do that important thing, so instead let that passion seep out through their sex lives, their clothing choices, the bands they listen to, etc. *Tropic of Cancer* is all about yearning, all about grasping life to the fullest you possibly can, not for the sake of simply doing so but rather because this is the only way you'll ever find what you're truly seeking. Or as Miller himself puts it: "I can't get it out of my mind what a discrepancy there is

between ideas and living."

But that all said, let me just plainly warn you -- *whoo man, is this a filthy book*, with it unbelievably enough still just as able to shock and offend as when it first came out. And again, I see this as an asset and strength of Miller as an author; because ultimately it's not really the language itself that has gotten people so upset about this book over the decades (you'll hear worse in most Hollywood hard-R sex comedies), but rather that Miller embraces a prurient attitude throughout, one that plainly addresses the cold realities about sex which are not usually discussed in polite company. Just take, for example, the chapter where he compares for the reader the various young artsy prostitutes who live in his neighborhood; of how the best ones are the ones who have come to grips with the fact that they're whores and not wives or girlfriends, and therefore lustily embrace the exact disgusting acts that wives and girlfriends won't, the main reason men visit prostitutes in the first place. **Yeah, not for delicate sensibilities**, this one is; despite it being almost 75 years old now, you should still exercise caution before jumping into it feet-first.

And then finally, re-reading it this week for the first time since college two decades ago, I've realized something else about this book; that it's not just the fun little stories of crazy sex and urban living that Miller gets right, but also the more somber reflections of perpetual poverty, of the almost existential dread that can develop when waking up in the morning and not knowing how you're going to eat that day. This is the flip-side of the crazy bohemian life, something plainly there in *Tropic of Cancer* but that most people don't see when first reading it, or when reading it at a young age; that to live a life rejecting middle-class conformity and embracing chaos is not just endless evenings of absinthe and oral sex, that there's a very real price to pay for rejecting all these things as well, the price of health and kids and normal relationships and any kind of slow building one could potentially do in their chosen career. Let's not ever forget that the things Miller talks about in *Tropic of Cancer* happened half a decade before his literary career ever really took off, years where basically none of them got anything accomplished at all except to definitively list all the kinds of books they *didn't* want to write; let's also never forget that Miller's life got dramatically more boring after his literary career took off, busy as he suddenly was with...you know, *writing all those books*. The artistic life can be...

Alex says

"Art consists in going the full length. If you start with the drums you have to end with dynamite."

But if you begin with masturbation, you don't necessarily end with sex.

There are books you have to read at a certain age. There are others that are ageless, and those books are better. This should be read when you're young and stupid. Are you young and stupid now? Fantastic; read this and hate me. Are you older? Then read something else.

Maybe something for old people, like Henry James.

I kinda hate to admit it, but I abandoned ship on this book. I almost never do that, but after 100 or so pages, I believed I had the idea here. (The idea is cunts.)

"I am writing exactly what I want to write and the way I want to do it. Perhaps it's twaddle."

- Henry Miller

"Cunt" like a thousand times

- what Henry Miller wants to write

Jonathan says

This may be the greatest book ever written. This opening passage proves it:

"I have no money, no resources, no hopes. I am the happiest man alive. A year ago, six months ago, I thought I was an artist. I no longer think about it. I am. Everything that was literature has fallen from me. There are no more books to be written, thank God.

This then? This is not a book. This is libel, slander, defamation of character. This is not a book, in the ordinary sense of the word. No, this is a prolonged insult, a gob of spit in the face of Art, a kick in the pants to God, Man, Destiny, Time, Love, Beauty ... what you will. I am going to sing for you, a little off key perhaps, but I will sing. I will sing while you croak, I will dance over your dirty corpse....

To sing you must first open your mouth. You must have a pair of lungs, and a little knowledge of music. It is not necessary to have an accordion, or a guitar. The essential thing is to want to sing. This then is a song. I am singing."

Jana says

The only reason this book is a classic is because men were editors and this book gave them boners. And then male readers had boners and women were shocked with Miller's vocabulary. So, it wasn't that difficult to become a classic. Especially in those days, when a word cunt was such a taboo. But, again who am I joking, I have a few Irish/English male friends who blush when somebody says cunt around them. And they love Miller, so I think that's the individual matter of upbringing and bon ton, because in my mother language we don't have "that" much offensive word. Or we do, but we curse a lot so we don't hear it anymore.

Fabian says

I am usually a fan of zeitgeist crystallization in literature. Here is a true account/fiction which places a smudgy magnifying glass to the underbelly of a famed city. Paris has NEVER been described THIS ugly!

The protagonist is Mr. Miller, and he lives in absolute poverty, which enhances his artist's eye. He transcends the tangibility and heaviness of matter...

Anyway, I know this was controversial and even banned for decades because of the sexual depictions and language. This is from the 30's! Miller is a vagabond, like I said, whose adventures pretty much resemble those of Marcello Mastroianni from the F. Fellini films-- that is, much sex, confusion, some self awareness & a lack of self control. Does this type of behavior mark every age? every generation?

There is much to think about however. Miller is more poet than cohesive storyteller, sure. The ambiance is masterfully established. Though somewhat different (this one is about writers in Paris, the other about journalists in San Juan, Puerto Rico), I prefer and can say more about "The Rum Diary" by Hunter S. Thompson than this one.

Poor, talented (or, worse, talentless) people of the paper and pen!

K.D. Absolutely says

One of this book's themes is sex. So, if you are squeamish about sex on books, or about sex itself, then don't read this review. More importantly, DON'T read this book. My review is definitely lame compared to its sexual content.

But not reading the book is like being in the USA without tasting bagel in one of their international airports. Whenever I come to the US, I always grab a bagel and a cup of coffee while waiting for my flight. I think that bread (rarely sold here in the Philippines) defines what being in the US is for me.

American Henry Miller (1891-1980), a struggling writer, went to Paris alone and almost penniless. There he tried to write. A friend coached him: *just write what you feel*. So he did. When *Tropic of Cancer* came out in 1936, he was 37 years old. When it was published in the US in 1961, it was banned for frank and graphic depiction of sex and it led to a series of obscenity trials that tested the American laws on pornography. Now, it is heralded as one of the most important 20th century novels: Modern Library's Best 100 and TIME 100 Best Novels.

He just wrote how he felt and oh boy, he was the guy! Being in the lovable Paris with a bevy of women (never mind what kind) to have sex with, despite being hungry most of the time, he must have the time of his life. Sex left and right, Paris must be heaven on earth. Wiki says that he became Anaïs Nin's lover who paid for his apartment and Lawrence Durrell's friend who brought him to Greece. What a guy!

Reading *Cancer*, you can see why. Miller was a genius. He writes with total abandon. He wrote what he felt *and thought* and I say, what a brain! Fluid, playful narrative and he knew a lot of things to say. You cannot predict what he would think next as he said something strange like: *all the pores of my skin open and something is eating my gizzards* or totally obscene like *O Tania, where now is that warm cunt of yours, those fat, heavy garters, those soft, bulging thighs? There is a bone in my prick six inches long. I will ream out every wrinkle in your cunt, Tania, big with seed. I will send you home to your Sylvester with an ache in your belly and your womb turned inside out..* Tania here is the wife of his (Miller, as he uses first person narrative) landlord Sylvester.

So, how come bagel represents America for me? Not the hole, don't be silly. *Cancer* is luscious, meaty, filling and stings to your palate. It is not a novel for everyone and definitely not to those who hate sex in books, or sex itself. You have to go beyond the sex parts and pay more attention to the storytelling (reminds me of Nabokov's *Lolita*) and the struggles of the writers in Paris, the city where artists of the world (that started with Dante, Rabelais, Van Gogh, etc) congregate. Or appreciate how friendship can help one in surviving financial difficulty (not necessarily to become one's lover).

Next time you come to the US, why not bring this book and read this in the airport while having a bagel? You will see what I mean.

E. says

When I read this for the first time I thought the world was opening up and eating people.

I wanted to get drunk and go on a hooker spree, to move to Paris and generally debauch for the rest of my 20's....

Then I realized I kind of wanted to do all this anyways but with Miller's aid I could and even better I could disguise the whole thing as "literary."

I struggled through Capricorn, through The Books in My Life, through a number of Miller's personal letters and musings. I even made a pilgrimage to Big Sur.

Then I picked up Richard Brautigan or "Cannary Row" or something and I realized I could skip Paris. I could skip Europe entirely. I could just drink wine on a bench in my back yard, throw on an old Bill Broonzy CD and stare at the sun. I could even meet a nice girl and keep her around for a while. No need for crabs or lice or bed bugs at all. No sir, just soft northern california sunlight and grassy knolls.

That was it. The dirty big city Miller hangovers were gone.....

Still, for a few months there, Miller was really really doing it for me. At the time it was true life changing stuff.

5 stars.

Jenn(ifer) says

The only thing that saved this book from a 1 star rating is the occasional stellar paragraph such as this:

"For some reason or other man looks for the miracle, and to accomplish it he will wade through blood. He will debauch himself with ideas, he will reduce himself to a shadow if for only one second of his life he can close his eyes to the hideousness of reality. Everything is endured - disgrace, humiliation, poverty, war, crime, ennui - in the belief that overnight something will occur, a miracle, which will render life tolerable. And all the while a meter is running inside and there is no hand that can reach in there and shut it off."

It's paragraphs like that one, interspersed between pages and pages of verbal masturbation, that made it possible for me to even finish this book. What remains are self-indulgent, vulgar to excess, misongynistic ramblings.

There is no plot. There is no continuity of characters. There is nothing that ties this work together from start to finish, save the theme of hunger, whether it be for sex or food. This was one of those books on my list of "I really should read this book," and I'm glad I read it, but I won't recommend it to you. Or you. Or you.

John Doe says

George Orwell wrote an essay about this book called, "Inside the Whale." The title alludes to the Jonah story in the bible. In that story Jonah rejected his responsibility, ran, and was swallowed by a whale. He finally accepted his responsibility and returned to the world. In contrast, Orwell's Miller doesn't want to leave the

whale. God's punishment ironically is Miller's safe and comfortable oasis. Miller can attempt to triumph over god in this way because he has chosen an ironic stance towards his life. God's punishment is only a punishment for a serious person. A serious person makes the world's values and causes his values, his causes. Such a person feels happy and safe in the world, has plans, wants to buy a condo in the suburbs, etc. The unserious person, on the other hand, is alienated by the world's values and from its causes. Slavery, wars, poverty, racism, the rate race—inside a whale at the bottom of the ocean with a ton of blubber insulating you on every side is not such a bad way to ride out a nuclear winter. Clearly, Miller is not a Jonah. Jonah is a criminal guilty of a specific crime. For Miller, the world is guilty and the best a person can hope for is not to be an accomplice, etc. Orwell is really smart and his insight is really helpful. But, he makes it clear that he is not a Miller fan. I, on the other hand, am a fan.

Luís C. says

In the meridian of time there is no justice: there is only the poetry of motion creating the illusion of truth and drama. If at any time and anywhere we face face to face the absolute vanishes that great sympathy that made men like Gautama and Jesus seem divine..

"Tropic of Cancer" was first published in 1934 and was soon accused of pornographic and obscene, getting banned in the US until the year of 1961. Today, reading, although permitted, still causes some discomfort and nausea. It's like getting without waiting, a blow to the consciousness that leave sequels to the end of life.

.....

Considered by me as a work that definitely marked my fine youth, "**The Tropic of Cancer**" is a series of books that my father had for some time, the complete collection. At the time, the use of language used at the time with fifteen / sixteen years old of my life, more or less, do not say it has me shocked, but found odd because it was still at an age slightly pubescent. Still, it is a disturbing work.

Here are the list of the complete collection of what I think it is:

Correct me if I'm wrong:

- The Tropic of Cancer
- The Tropic of Capricorn
- Nexus
- Plexus
- Sexus

Unfortunately, left him only a few books ..

Paul Bryant says

My fiction addiction
Had lost all its friction

I needed raw meat but this new stuff was veggie
Predictable, safe, and not bold, tough and edgy
I thought *Tropic of Cancer*
Would be the answer
For years it was banned
Throughout every land
But five c words per page
Suppressed masculine rage
And tours of French pudenda
Was his only agenda
So reading Henry Miller
Just made me feel iller
And iller
And iller
And iller

Paquita Maria Sanchez says

I am going to create a new goodreads bookshelf titled "sausage party." It will exist solely for Henry Miller.

Kate says

I got through the first 150 pages before I decided that life is too short to waste time reading books you hate. Maybe I'm not smart enough or deep enough to appreciate a book like *Tropic of Cancer*, but for me each page was a tedious struggle. The author of the book's introduction boldly asserts that Henry Miller is "the greatest living author" (obviously, the edition I read was published prior to Miller's death in 1980), but I found Miller's frenetic, meandering style tiresome.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not one to carelessly fling aside any book that doesn't capture my attention in the first 100 pages. Once I start a book, it's difficult for me to give it up, mostly because it makes me feel like a quitter; but I found myself getting angry as I grudgingly plodded through this one. I kept thinking, "Henry, for chrissakes, give me something, ANYTHING to latch onto here!" That's when I decided it was time to give up. Some semblance of a plot might have helped keep my interest piqued, but I don't think that storytelling was the author's aim. The long and short of it is - these kinds of books are not my cup of tea.

Tara says

"I believe that today more than ever a book should be sought after even if it has only one great page in it. We must search for fragments, splinters, toenails, anything that has ore in it, anything that is capable of resuscitating the body and the soul."

Tropic of Cancer was a visceral, pulsating heap of 1930's Paris, served up by an American expat

writer/drifter/ne'er-do-well. Interestingly, this thing was banned in the U.S. for over 25 years due to its so-called "obscene content." I personally didn't find the obscenity all that obscene. It was necessary to what Miller was doing artistically, and it never felt gratuitous. I mean, sexuality is kind of a big part of life; why deprive ourselves of its more humorous aspects by pretending that it isn't often impolite, raunchy, and even ridiculous?

Also, on a somewhat related note, where else do we find life crawling, swarming, seething, struggling, and finally, ultimately triumphing (if such a thing is even possible, and if only for an instant), but in the cesspools, the muck and the mire? In that sense, the unabashed dirtiness in this book reminded me of the far more potent, lavish descriptions of filth in Huysmans' *À rebours*. And why not revel in the beauty that can be found in the squalid, insane, shitty, and "perverse"? As Miller pointed out, the alternative can actually be far more disgusting and abhorrent:

"...the monstrous thing is not that men have created roses out of this dung heap, but that, for some reason or other, they should want roses. For some reason or other man looks for the miracle, and to accomplish it he will wade through blood. He will debauch himself with ideas, he will reduce himself to a shadow if for only one second of his life he can close his eyes to the hideousness of reality. Everything is endured—disgrace, humiliation, poverty, war, crime, ennui—in the belief that overnight something will occur, a miracle, which will render life tolerable. And all the while a meter is running inside and there is no hand that can reach in there and shut it off."

Another aspect of this book worth mentioning is Miller's description of the dispassionate, disinterested youth culture that he saw hanging in lifeless tatters around him. The frustration and horror he felt toward a generation of increasingly vacuous vacancies floating around in bloated torpor and apathy is something to which many of us can relate. And hell, why not be honest? That basic condition of mindless *drift* is also something we are both fascinated and repulsed by whenever we catch sight of it in **ourselves**.

What diminished this otherwise dynamic reading experience, and the reason I only gave it 3 stars, was Miller's prose, which felt inconsistent to me. Often it seemed like it was trying too hard, and that Miller was painfully overthinking his writing. It flowed far more naturally when his characters were just shooting the shit. But when he was attempting to be loftily poetic or profound, his efforts frequently struck me as forced, affected, and contrived. His writing fell prey to what he rightfully condemned in others, and became "*constipated and paralyzed by thought*." However, there were quite a few exquisite moments when it broke free from its stifling self-consciousness and succeeded in doing something genuinely brilliant, inventive, and inspired.

So overall, while the book was a mixed bag, it was still very much worth reading. If you don't mind getting a little dirty, why not dance and splash and play in the mud with Miller for a while?

Vit Babenco says

What is a writer's internal world? What is a writer's external world?

One is ejected into the world like a dirty little mummy; the roads are slippery with blood and no one knows why it should be so. Each one is traveling his own way and, though the earth be rotting with good things, there is no time to pluck the fruits; the procession scrambles toward the exit sign, and such a panic is there, such a sweat to escape, that the weak and the helpless are trampled into the mud and their cries are unheard.

Paris is a cradle of arts. Paris is an academy of creative thought. And **Henry Miller** is there like a selfish fetus in the monstrous Gothic womb passing through a necessary gestation. He who walks his own path, arrives at his own place...

[illegible]

[in Montparnasse (hide spoiler)]